



Central Iraq

Local religious leaders create alliance

Chaplains build Baghdad partnership, convey Coalition support, commitment

Compiled from staff reports

BAGHDAD — Since June, chaplains of the Ready First Combat Team, the 1st Armored Division's 1st Brigade and attached elements, located in eastern Baghdad, have been forging alliances with local religious leaders.

"Unit Ministry Teams have made at least 29 contacts with an assortment of religious leaders — from Shi'a and Sunni Muslims to Armenian and Roman Catholic bishops and priests," said Chaplain (Maj.) Dean Bonura of Task Force 1st Armored Division.

Constructive engagement with religious leaders in Baghdad has increasingly become important to the overall success of the Coalition mission, according to the chaplain.

Early on in its mission, the 1st Armored Division committed itself to building a partnership with religious

leaders in Baghdad to enhance the Coalition Provisional Authority's mission to stabilize Baghdad.

From the beginning, division leaders recognized the significant role religious leaders would play in a mission committed to stabilization and peace for the region.

Enthusiastically, chaplains took on the task of contacting local religious leaders, supporting commanders in their contacts, and establishing rapport for further dialog, said Bonura.

So far, chaplains have contacted religious leaders through the neighborhood advisory councils and networking from existing contacts.

The message chaplains bring encourages support for Coalition forces, conveys the U.S. commitment to provide an acceptable quality of life for the Iraqi people and strengthens the commitment to uphold the importance of religious rites and the sacred practices, regardless of reli-



Courtesy photo

From left, Chaplain Mostellar, A Battery, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Field Artillery Regiment; Imam Sheikh Hassan; and Chaplain (Maj.) Bonura, 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division, help forge an alliance within the local religious community.

gious affiliation, explained Bonura.

Recently, chaplains from the Ready First Combat Team met for lunch with Imam Mohammad Adil at

the Baghdad University Mosque.

Their discussion with the Imam (the leader of a mosque) was typical of many conversations chaplains are having with religious leaders. Imams are concerned for the security of their neighborhoods, quality of life, and helping the needy.

During lunch, Imam Adil spoke about his desire to produce a newsletter for his congregation to address "the features of Islamic religion . . . and the nature of the student's life in the west," in order to create greater opportunities for further dialogue among Islamic students and Coalition forces.

Not all contacts have gone so smoothly. Despite many efforts to improve the Iraqi people's living conditions, particularly providing repairs for mosques and churches, there is a lingering sense that the Coalition is doing too little.

For example, Sheikh Hayder Kadhim of the Al Tamimi Mosque is concerned about the use of U.S.

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Ramadan Meal Hours

The following are Ramadan meal hours in the Coalition Provisional Authority dining facility for Islamic personnel.

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Coalition to get more news to America

By Sgt. 1st Class Doug Sample
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — Senior Coalition leaders in Iraq are about to increase their ability to keep America informed.

Two state-of-the-art ultra-compact satellite terminals, along with a two-person team to set them up and get them working, are in Baghdad. Starting in the coming weeks, the satellites will beam up-to-the-second news feeds and video footage back to the United States.

Plans include making the feeds available to military news broadcast outlets, such as the American Forces Radio and Television Service News Center and American Forces Network, as well as to commercial television outlets.

The Defense Media Center, located at March Air Reserve Base, Calif., is providing the equipment and manpower.

With these terminals, senior U.S. officials will get "the word" back to the United States without delay, no matter where they happen to be in Iraq, said Allison Barber, special assistant to the acting assistant secretary of defense for public affairs.

"By virtue of their portability, these terminals will offer our top people in Iraq broadcast-quality

video satellite connectivity in a 'go anywhere' package that breaks down into just three airline-checkable cases," Barber said.

The satellites are a way to get stories on what units are doing in Iraq back home to U.S.-based units and families, said Army Master Sgt. John Mings, a member of the team in Baghdad setting up the equipment.

The capability to broadcast from Iraq is a natural extension of a broadcasting tradition that goes back more than 60 years, said Larry Sichter, DMC's affiliate relations chief.

"American military broadcasters have been on hand at nearly every major engagement since 1943," he said. "When the Allies invaded North Africa it was an Armed Forces Radio newsman who recorded the opening salvos.

"The (media center) will always bring American Forces Network, with stateside news, sports and entertainment, to wherever American troops are overseas," Sichter said. "Now, we'll also be able to bring back a look at what our troops accomplish."

"It will really establish us as a news presence in Baghdad," Mings said. "This gives the military a real chance to show there are all these (positive) things going on to rebuild the country."

Central Iraq Briefs

IEDs found in ambulance

BAGHDAD — Iraqi Police Service recently discovered and defused a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device in an ambulance.

Police noticed an ambulance was not using its emergency lights and appeared empty. IPS attempted to stop the ambulance, but it sped away, causing an accident. Three people exited the vehicle, firing small arms at the other vehicle involved in the accident, then fled the scene.

Explosives were found after a search of the abandoned ambulance. An IPS explosive ordnance disposal team disarmed four 155 mm artillery rounds and other various explosives.

A U.S. military EOD team evaluated the explosives and determined they were stable enough for transport to a U.S. military site.

The U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation is currently investigating. (Courtesy 1st Armored Division Public Affairs)

Air strike destroys meeting site

AR RAMADI — Earlier this month, the 3-505 Parachute Infantry Regiment and 504th Military Police Company conducted a joint operation just east of Lutayfiyah.

The mission was an air strike to destroy a known weapons storage location and meeting site for enemy personnel. The mission was conducted to deny the enemy the opportunity to coordinate future attacks.

Coalition forces asked residents in the area to temporarily vacate their homes so the target could be safely destroyed. Two precision bombs later destroyed the house known for harboring combatants and storing ammunition used to make improvised explosive devices.

The destruction of the house was the result of an ongoing operation in response to recent ambushes on Coalition forces in the area. (Courtesy 82nd Airborne Division Public Affairs)

Soldiers defend hospital

FALLUJAH — Paratroopers from the 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, successfully defended the Jordanian Hospital and Forward Operating Base Volturno recently from an attack.

Soldiers were fired upon with automatic weapons from a stopped vehicle near the hospital. The soldiers returned fire forcing the attackers to flee. Another vehicle approached and the fleeing Iraqis attempted to get in, but were prevented from doing so by the paratroopers.

A truck subsequently approached at a high rate of speed and failed to slow after the paratroopers fired warning shots. The soldiers engaged the vehicle and killed the two people in the vehicle. Hostile forces then fired at U.S. troops from a fourth vehicle, at which time the soldiers also engaged that automobile.

In total, the soldiers killed six aggressors and wounded four. There were four other detainees as a result of the action. There were no injuries to Coalition forces. (Courtesy 82nd Airborne Division Public Affairs)



Staff Sgt. Robert Kaiser, 115th Military Police Company assistant squad leader, shows off his work of art, an angel statue he created at Camp Cropper.

MP brings touch of art to camp

Uses many talents to help make improvements for troops in area

Story and photo by Sgt. Rachel Brune
800th Military Police Brigade

BAGHDAD — With arms outstretched towards the heavens, a pale angel stands immobile under a bamboo canopy. A modest olive drab toga protects her from the elements.

This concrete work of art is not what a visitor might expect to see at Camp Cropper, a detainee area run by the 115th Military Police Company, a National Guard unit from Salisbury, Md.

Working over the course of one month, Staff Sgt. Robert Kaiser, assistant squad leader, used concrete and barbed wire, a bayonet, tent stake and wire brush to create the free-standing sculpture.

"It's my nature to build things," said Kaiser. A native of Baltimore, Md., Kaiser works as a mechanical engineer in the civilian world.

The sculpture was modeled on another soldier from the 115th, Spc. Cheryl Reynolds. She and her husband, also with the unit, gave their blessing to the project, said Kaiser.

"I took certain liberties," said Kaiser. "The statue is actually taller than she is."

The sculpture was only the second one Kaiser has ever done. His first, a life-size dog, stands only a few feet away.

"It was a challenge, something this tall and top heavy, but freestanding," said Kaiser.

The model had her own special conditions.

Kaiser couldn't give the angel 'cankles,' or really thick ankles, he said. Reynolds also requested the angel not have hamhocks, or excessively large thighs.

To comply with these requests, and still maintain the sculpture's balance, Kaiser reinforced the angel's ankles with steel rods, he said.

"I had a lot of her [Reynolds'] input on it," said Kaiser. Overall, she was pleased with the effort.

To make a casting of the face, Kaiser poured reg-

ular concrete into a wash basin, added water and waited until the mass had thickened to a "peanut butter" consistency.

He then made an impression of Reynolds' face and used it as a mold for the statue.

"Most people view [the angel] as art," said Kaiser. "They come by and are fairly appreciative."

Some visitors to the area don't even realize the statue was made by an American soldier, and assume that it was an Iraqi work, said Kaiser.

Although the structure is made of concrete, it is very brittle, said Kaiser, who will leave the sculpture in place when the unit redeploy.

Kaiser's sculptural efforts are not the only way he has tried to improve the troop area. For his next project, he is using citronella candles and insulation to raise the temperature of the water in the showers -- which he also built.

This soldier's hand can also be seen in a self-closing door, a brick-floored patio covered by a bamboo lattice intertwined with vines, a shower-water recycling system and even in the unit patches that many of the troops wear on their uniforms.

In the rush to get through the mobilization process, the 115th soldiers were issued desert camouflage uniforms and patches, but didn't have time for the patches to be sewn on.

Kaiser brought his sewing machine and worked eight straight 12-hour days to sew the patches on about 60 to 70 percent of the troops' uniforms, he said.

When asked why he decided to embark on the sculptures, Kaiser smiled and replied: "Boredom."

When the unit first arrived, there was not a lot of time off, but when the soldiers had time, there was not a lot to do.

"(The sculptures) were mostly done because the materials were around, and I had plenty of time," said Kaiser.

Real estate team works with property owners

Coalition looks to compensate private citizens for use of land in Iraq

By Grant Sattler

Coalition Provisional Authority
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Iraq Provisional Command

BAGHDAD — As the Iraqi Army collapsed during the war, Coalition forces that deposed Saddam Hussein's regime primarily took up residence on property owned by the former government.

Coalition troops entered military bases, government compounds, and grandiose palaces that Saddam squandered the nation's wealth on.

But in some places, the mission to provide a secure environment for Iraq's democratic re-birth led Coalition forces to set up operations where no government facility or military base was available.

"When we came in, there was direction to all the forces to utilize Iraqi government property, palaces, or military installations, and to stay out of private property, and for the most part that's what's happened," said Mike Taylor, team leader of the Contingency Real Estate Support Team with the Coalition Provisional Authority U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Iraq Provisional Command. "There have been a few cases though where we've occupied private property."

But, unlike the former regime, the Coalition is ensuring private citizens are compensated for the use of their property. Taylor and his Contingency Real Estate Support Team, or



Courtesy photo

Contingency Real Estate Support Team members view diagrams and maps to validate actual locations and dimensions of property in Iraq.

CREST, are in Iraq to make sure private property owners are compensated for Coalition use.

Facilities formerly belonging to the Iraqi military, Ba'ath Party, or Saddam's regime, are gratis. However, in cases where use of private property has continued after May 1, or in locations where expanding security zones around occupied former Iraqi government property has impacted on private property, there will be compensation payments made to the owners, Taylor said. "According to the rules of land war-

fare, we can't come in and seize private property," he added.

The CREST works with military units, U.S. Army Civil Affairs, Army Claims Agency, and others who are approached by Iraqis seeking compensation for Coalition use of their property.

Determining what are valid claims, and what part of those claims are real estate costs and what must be requested as damage compensation through other means is a challenging task that has the CREST coordinating closely with judge advocate general

officers.

CREST Real Estate Appraiser Jim Burch said deeds have to be closely checked.

"We find there are a lot of fake deeds, a lot of fraud," Burch said. "So, we go to the registry and confirm that it is a valid deed."

Validating the actual location and dimensions of the property is not straightforward either. With the help of an interpreter, CREST Real Estate Specialist Armando Moneu pours over a large pile of Iraqi diagrams, maps, and satellite imagery to determine true property boundaries.

Often, however, he finds the diagrams do not match with the reality presented by overhead satellite imagery.

The CREST goes out often to measure and calculate the rough dimensions of property before meeting with claimants.

Three days of each seven-day work week, Moneu assists CREST member Ken Chennault at CPA headquarters in conducting property assessments for public property which will be used by Coalition units or contractors under letters of authority.

Taylor said they want to do the right thing by rural property owners as well, but face a myriad of obstacles. The first is determining who is the actual property owner.

"We have been looking at what the real estate laws are and what was

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Medics earn recognition for outstanding performance

By Spc. Chad D. Wilkerson

372nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

BAGHDAD — Soldiers who work at the Task Force 1-35 Armor aid station, which is part of Task Force 1st Battalion, 35th Armored Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, were recognized earlier this month for outstanding performance of their duties during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Col. Anthony Young, 30th Medical Brigade chief of staff, spoke to the medics, thanking them for their hard work and encouraging them to keep going strong.

The platoon was issued a certificate of appreciation for medical care they provided for Combined Joint Task Force-7 personnel, Young said.

The medics were the only medical unit on the Coalition Provisional Authority presidential palace compound upon arrival earlier this year.

Young said the soldiers did a fantastic job of adapting to an unusual and difficult situation.

"None of the U.S. Army units here had acceptable medical assets for themselves," said Dr. (Lt. Col.) Stephen Marks, battalion surgeon for Task Force 1-35. "By default, due to our location, we began to provide medical care to Coalition personnel in the area."

The aid station, Marks said, was equipped to provide medical care only to the approximately 750 soldiers who make up their battalion. Instead, the station took up responsibility for nearly 5,000 Coalition members from all countries, including military and civil service personnel, and contractor employees.

"We took care of a lot of sick calls for CPA personnel, and have done (medical evacuations) for many soldiers and civilians," Marks said.

Pfc. Crizam Carlos, combat medic and guidon bearer assigned to the aid station, was one of the soldiers honored during the ceremony.

"Being an aid station, we are a platoon-sized unit; not a really large setup," Carlos said. "Since we have been here, we have constantly pushed the limit of how many patients we can care for."

The type of care provided by the aid station, said Carlos, varies from treating the common cold or flu, to caring for combat-related injuries, such as severe burns or gunshot wounds. He said that he and his comrades were happy to receive some recognition for their hard work.

On top of their medical duties, the station's staff also performs standard soldier duties. Tasks such as pulling guard duty and radio watch have to be worked into what has turned out to be a hectic, ever-changing schedule, Carlos said.

"There are a lot of young men out here doing great things," Marks said. "This operation has been many of these medics' first experience with trauma in war, and we saved a lot of lives and limbs. They will be well prepared to do so in the future."

PROPERTY

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established here. A lot of property was nationalized in the early 1970s, which means there is a lot of government property," Taylor said. "But a lot of land that was nationalized was taken from individual farmers. Then, they turned around and leased it back to the same people who'd been on it for hundreds of years." Farmers lost title to their property.

Because the Army can only make lease payments to the owner, officials are seeking other means to provide assistance to farmers whose income has been affected by Coalition forces, Taylor said.

Burch said the farmers, who were permitted on the land by the Iraqi Army, at great personal risk from unexploded ordnance, can be compensated through a real estate contract for lost profit from the property if they can demonstrate an average income and prove ownership.

Burch also has the task of determining residential property and rental values.

"The market is extremely low, lower than any country I've been in," he said. "(It's) almost the same as the communist government in Bosnia (where) there wasn't a free flow of the market."

Burch said finding comparable activity to base values on is difficult. Unlike researching a market in the United States where multiple listings are available, there is little published information, although a few sales of lots in Baghdad's newer subdivisions have been recorded.

Researching deeds has not provided much market data either.

"Deeds here don't give the same information you get in the United States," Burch said. "They show ownership, but don't say who you bought it from, they don't say what kind of a price you paid for it, and there are not a lot of deeds I've been able to find where properties have been built and resold."

"The market is extremely low, lower than any country I've been in."

— Jim Burch
CREST real estate appraiser

It can be particularly complicated to determine fair compensation for commercial property, Taylor said. Owners may want reimbursement for lost business, costs of relocating operations, costs of keeping an idle, trained workforce on payroll, damages to property, and costs to return the property to its original condition.

Generally, property owners ask for a large figure in total compensation. It is through negotiations that CREST works with them to determine the basis of each part of the claim, validate the amounts claimed, explain what is a basis for a lease payment, and suggest to them what other claims may be reimbursed by other means.

"We're going to come up with what we can pay them for rent, and working hand-in-hand with the claims officer, any additional claims," said Taylor.

But Burch said even determining a fair rental price for commercial property is difficult for Iraq.

"That market is really tough to gauge," he said. "(Iraqis) don't go somewhere and just lease a building. (They) build their own building on land the government allows them to use, putting their own investment into it, trusting that they would be able to continue in business."

In the past, maintaining that favor meant giving gifts to Saddam's sons Uday and Qusay, Burch said.

Not finding a free market for warehouse space, Burch has had to use cost information from regional sources outside Iraq to apply and extrapolate to the local area to arrive at a fair lease price.

Having served on a CREST for a short time in Kuwait at the onset of war, Burch developed a network of Iraqi contacts who have been helpful in getting information on the Iraqi real estate market.

Treating individuals fairly is important to building good will with the local Iraqi populace, Taylor said. "A lot of units out there need assistance, but have had a hard time finding we're in country," he said. "We're here to help."

electricity at St. Mary's Church.

The unit commander was able to submit a proposal for the installation of a generator at St. Mary's Church. Similar projects have been started at several mosques in Baghdad.

It is important that all faith groups are represented in U.S. efforts to assist religious leaders, Bonura said.

Despite very positive engagements, there remains a lot to do. Chaplains, along with unit commanders, have many more religious leaders to meet.

"Particularly challenging is the effort to win over neutral and non-supportive religious leaders," Bonura said. "Those leaders must understand that their unsupportive remarks ultimately hurt the Iraqi people and could undermine the great progress that has already been made."

Unit chaplains believe the alliance will help in the long-term process of engendering hope and understanding among all religious leaders, as well as provide for a prosperous peace. (Courtesy 1st Armored Division Public Affairs Office)

ALLIANCE

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funds for repairs and revitalization in Baghdad.

He contends repairing the bridge between Karbala and An Najaf, two sacred Shi'a cities south of Baghdad, would be a better use of U.S. money.

"The repairing of the bridge would be a great gesture," he said, "especially during Ramadan."

He also indicated the need for security assistance around his mosque, another common theme among Muslim leaders.

Contacts with Christian leaders have been friendly, and their concerns are similar to the Imams: the need for security and the availability of electricity.

Not long ago, one of the chaplains in the brigade met with Archbishop Avak Asadourian and the Rev. Gabriellian Simon of the Armenian Orthodox Church.

Both men expressed deep concerns over the security of their parishioners and the need for

Chapel Services

Coalition Provisional Authority Chapel
Now located in Tent No. 3
near the CPA Palace south entrance

Worship and Prayer Schedule**Daily Islamic prayer**

Times vary.

See schedule posted on chapel doors.

Sunday

7:30 a.m. — Episcopal, Lutheran and Anglican

10:30 a.m. — General Christian

2 p.m. — Latter Day Saints

4:30 p.m. — Roman Catholic

6 p.m. — Contemporary Protestant

Monday

7 p.m. — General Christian

Tuesday

6:30 p.m. — Ladies Bible study

Wednesday

6:30 a.m. — Morning Bible study
(In chaplain's office)

7 p.m. — Bible study

Friday

7 p.m. — Choir rehearsal

(For 10:30 a.m. Sunday worship service)

Saturday

12:30 p.m. — Buddhist worship service

CPA welcomes any Islamic or Jewish personnel interested in performing services as a Lay Leader. If interested, call Chaplain Frank Wismer at (914) 360-6485 or stop by the CPA Chaplain office.

Seventh Day Adventist service**Saturday**

11 a.m. — 30th Medical Brigade headquarters building, second floor

Jewish services
Camp Victory Chapel

Sunday

7:30 p.m.

Saturday

10:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Goddess Victory Circle

The Goddess Victory Circle meets at 1 p.m. on Saturdays at the 10th Military Police Battalion, outside near the 109th Medical Compound on the back side of Baghdad International Airport.

All religions are welcome to attend. Everyone should bring their own chair and spirituality.

Access your newspaper
the Coalition Scimitar
online at

<http://www.vcorps.army.mil/www/CJTf7/scimitar.htm>